White Anthrax

2153. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "White Anthrax, red alert : Delhi powders its knows", which appeared in the Times of India, dated 18th October, 2001;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the measures taken to combat the bio-terrorism unleashed by Anthrax ?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Government has taken following actions in the context of the present international scenario :

1. A detailed list of biological agents used as weapons prepared by the Indian Council of Medical Research along with signs and symptoms, likely method of dissemination, incubation period, lethality and the availability of vaccines, anti-microbial therapy and treatment has been circulated to Health Secretary and Director of Health Services of all States/UTs., and Central Government hospitals advising them to take precautionary steps.

2. National Institute of Communicable Diseases, 22, Sham Nath Marg, Delhi-110054, an Institute under Directorate General of Health Services has been designated as the nodal agency for carrying out the tests of suspected Anthrax samples.

3. CD Alert, a monthly Newsletter of National Institute of Communicable Diseases titled "Bioterrorism-Public Health system to Remain Alert" exclusively on Anthrax has been widely circulated. It has also been put in the Website of MOHFW (http://mohfw.nic.in) for information of general public.

4. Do's & Don'ts has already been published in the leading National Dailies regarding Anthrax.

5. A meeting-cum-workshop on Biological & Chemical Terrorism was convened by the Department of Health on 29th October, 2001 in New Delhi. The representatives from the States informed the preparatory

measures taken by them and assured availability of drugs in adequate quantity to tackle any situation.

6. The situation is being monitored.

Performance of State Programme for control of Blindness in Gujarat

2154. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the performance of State Programme for Control of Blindness and the district blindness control societies in Gujarat; and

(b) the funds released under the National Blindness Control Programme during 2001, till date?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR) : (a) Gujarat is one of the best performing State in the country. Cataract Operations performed during the last 3 years in Gujarat are as under :-

Year	Target	Cataract Operations Performed
1998-99	252000	291030
1999-00	290000	414580
2000-01	300000	405386

All the District Blindness Control Societies are functioning satisfactorily in the State.

(b) An amount of Rs. 62 lakhs has been released to State Blindness Control Society in Gujarat during 2001-02 (till date) for GIA to various DBCS.

Mental asylums

2155. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) how Government propose to ensure coverage of all the mental asylums in the survey directed by the Supreme Court of India;